United Nations Environment Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/GCSS.III/3/Add.1
30 December 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GOVERNING COUNCIL
Third special session
Nairobi, 3-5 February 1992
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

STATUS OF DESERTIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

Report of the Executive Director

Addendum

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

Following its consideration of the report of the Executive Director on the status of desertification and implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, the Governing Council may wish to consider adopting a decision along the following lines:

The Governing Council

1. *Notes (with appreciation)* the report of the Executive Director on the status of desertification and implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (UNEP/GCSS.III/3);

2. *Expresses its deep concern* at the continuing and expanding rates of land degradation and desertification in drylands, involving about 75 per cent of their rangelands, 45 per cent of their rainfed croplands and 30 per cent of their irrigated lands, thus affecting more than 3.5 billion hectares of the total world area of arid, semi-arid and sub-humid lands and about 900 million people, or one sixth of the world population;

3. *Also expresses deep concern* about the impact of desertification on Africa in particular where, in 1984 and 1985, between thirty million and thirty-five million people in twenty-one countries were seriously affected by expanding desertification induced by severe drought, ten million of them being displaced, while, in 1991, some thirty million people in Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan and several countries of the western Sahel were still threatened by famine and needed urgent external food aid in order to survive;

4. *Recognizes* that it is vital to combat desertification in all parts of the world's drylands;

5. *Affirms its conviction* that the priorities set in combating desertification must always be site-specific and should be decided upon by the authorities concerned in accordance with the actual situation in the particular countries and localities;

6. *Recommends*, bearing in mind paragraph 5 of the present decision, that the Governments participating in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development commit themselves, and the resources needed, to the following priorities in combating desertification and decide on whether they pursue all three priorities or, as a minimum, only the first two:

(a) The first-priority action on a global scale, estimated to cost between $1.4 billion and $4.2 billion per year for twenty years, should involve relevant preventive measures to halt the advance of desertification in:

(i) 102 million hectares of non-degraded or only slightly degraded irrigated croplands (70 per cent of their total area in the drylands);

(ii) 242 million hectares of non-degraded or only slightly degraded rainfed croplands (53 per cent of their total area in the drylands);

(iii) 1,223 million hectares of non-degraded or slightly degraded rangelands (27 per cent of their total area in the drylands);

(b) The second priority action, estimated to cost between $2.4 billion and $7.2 billion per year for twenty years, should involve implementing corrective measures in and sustaining the productivity of:

(i) 34 million hectares of moderately degraded irrigated croplands (23 per cent of their total area in the drylands);

(ii) 183 million hectares of moderately degraded rainfed croplands (40 per cent of their total area in the drylands);

(iii) 1,267 million hectares of moderately degraded rangelands (28 per cent of their total area in the drylands);

(c) The third priority action, estimated to cost between $6.2 billion and $11 billion per year for twenty years, shall involve the rehabilitation of:

(i) 9 million hectares of severely and very severely degraded irrigated croplands;

(ii) 33 million hectares of severely and very severely degraded rainfed croplands (reclamation of only 70 per cent of these lands may be economically viable due to climate and soil limitations);

(iii) 2,066 million hectares of severely and very severely degraded rangelands (reclamation of only 50 per cent of these lands may be economically viable due to climate and soil limitations);

7. *Recognizes* that sustainable socio-economic development and the protection of the environment are inseparable prerequisites of human survival and hence anti-desertification campaigns should be managed as integral parts of socio-economic development of the territories and societies of the drylands;

8. *Also recognizes* the significant differences in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in industrialized countries, where development does not depend on drylands, and in developing countries, particularly in the Sudano-Sahelian belt of Africa, where the development process relies almost entirely on the natural resource base;

9. *Strongly recommends* that cooperation at the international level should be strengthened in the following areas:

(a) Mobilization of financial resources and provision of financial assistance to countries that cannot cope with the problem by themselves;

(b) Development of appropriate pricing and trade policies;

(c) Provision of technical assistance to countries in need;

(d) Development of appropriate anti-desertification technologies, as well as technology transfer to needy countries on favourable terms;

(e) Monitoring and coordination of the anti-desertification campaign at a global level;

(f) Information exchange;

(g) International legislation;

10. *Invites* the Governments participating in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to review and endorse the considerations set forth in paragraphs 11-20 and paragraph 23 of the executive summary of the report of the Executive Director and to adopt the environmental/developmental targets for the year 2020 and the practical measures at the national level to achieve them, as set forth in the annex to the present decision;

11. *Invites* the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to bring the present decision to the attention of the Conference through its Preparatory Committee;

12. *Requests* the Executive Director:

(a) To give strong emphasis in the work programme of the Desertification Control Programme Activity Centre to:

(i) Refining the assessment of the status of desertification especially at the regional and national levels;

(ii) Implementing the policy guidelines and course of action presented in chapter III of the report of the Executive Director (UNEP/GCSS.III/3);

(b) To report on the implementation of the present decision to the Governing Council at its seventeenth regular session.

Annex

PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: ENVIRONMENTAL/DEVELOPMENTAL TARGETS FOR THE YEAR 2020 AND PRACTICAL MEASURES, AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, TO ACHIEVE THEM

A. *Targets*

1. To achieve the general goal of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, the following set of main environmental/developmental targets can be set for the year 2020:

(a) Preventing further deterioration of world food security and sustaining productivity of land affected by, or prone to, desertification through the introduction of environmentally sound, socially acceptable and economically feasible land-use systems based on social equity and appropriate technologies;

(b) Protection of non-degraded or slightly degraded lands prone to desertification and reclamation of degraded lands for productive use or their conservation for natural rehabilitation, as appropriate;

(c) Provision of adequate insurance against recurrent droughts and famine in the drylands;

(d) Improvement of the quality of life of the inhabitants of lands affected by desertification, including health, sanitation, family planning and the satisfaction of basic human needs;

(e) Prevention of adverse desertification impact on global climate change and biodiversity, including germplasm materials for many crop and fodder plants.

2. For the same period, the following targets for support measures are envisaged:

(a) Incorporation of national actions to combat desertification into broader national development policies, plans or programmes;

(b) Mobilization of national, regional and international resources needed for the full implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification;

(c) Mobilization and strengthening of national, regional and international institutional capabilities for implementing the Plan;

(d) Introduction of new economic and social policies for land use conducive to sustainable development of land and water resources and improvement of land use;

(e) Making land users the main actors in designing and implementing the Plan and ensuring full public participation in anti-desertification campaigns;

(f) Development of indigenous national and ecoregional scientific research and technology capabilities;

(g) Coordination of current and new national, regional and international sectoral programmes within broader environment/development programmes;

(h) Establishment of a global network of national, regional and international institutional and technical facilities for current operational assessment and continuous monitoring of desertification;

(i) Strengthening regional programmes and international cooperation in the campaign against desertification;

(j) Provision of a free flow of technology on favourable terms to areas affected by, or prone to, desertification;

(k) Improvement of infrastructure in the areas affected by, or prone to, desertification.

B. *Practical measures, at the national level, to achieve the targets*

3. The following set of practical measures, at the national level, is recommended to achieve the above targets.

(a) Preventive, Corrective and Rehabilitation Measures

Recommendation 1: To introduce improved land use systems:

Step 1 – To introduce an integrated approach to the utilization of every piece of land in accordance with its ecological characteristics;

Step 2 – To introduce improved land/water/crop management systems in existing irrigated croplands;

Step 3 – To stabilize rainfed croplands and to introduce improved soil/crop management systems into this land- use practice;

Step 4 – To introduce improved rangeland/husbandry management systems based on innovative or adapted indigenous technologies;

Step 5 – To undertake major afforestation/reforestation campaigns;

Step 6 – To undertake, whenever appropriate, major campaigns on stabilization of shifting sands.

Recommendation 2: To develop and introduce appropriate, improved agricultural and pastoral technologies that are socially and environmentally acceptable and economically feasible.

Recommendation 3: To establish adequate communication infrastructure and sufficient processing and marketing facilities.

Recommendation 4: To develop appropriately available water resources and to introduce improved water management systems.

Recommendation 5: To reclaim for productive use or to protect effectively for natural rehabilitation, as appropriate, severely desertified lands.

(b) Supporting Measures

Recommendation 6: To establish or to strengthen, as appropriate, the national institutional capabilities for implementing the Plan of Action.

Recommendation 7: To launch nationally a major sustained anti-desertification awareness/ training campaign.

Recommendation 8: To introduce a "loop model" into the existing or newly established extension service.

Recommendation 9: To finalize the operative large-scale local and national assessment of the current status of desertification.

Recommendation 10: To develop and adopt appropriate national legislation and new national environmentally sound and development-oriented land use policies and to introduce these institutionally.

Recommendation 11: To develop and introduce effective national insurance schemes against recurrent drought and famine.